

Geographic Distribution of Hired Farmworkers

Demand for hired farmworkers varies by type of crop and livestock, length of growing and harvesting season, extent of mechanization, and scale of production. As a result, the number of hired farmworkers varies significantly among the census regions (table 11). The West had over 42 percent of all hired farmworkers in 1998, and the West and the South together accounted for almost 75 percent of hired farmworkers. The Northeast contained the smallest number of workers (7 percent).

The demographic characteristics of hired farmworkers differ by region (table 12). Hired farmworkers in the Northeast were more likely to be females than in any other region. The percent of white workers was higher in the Northeast and Midwest, the percent of Hispanic workers was higher in the West, and the percent of black and other workers was higher in the South. Hired farmworkers were younger in the Northeast and Midwest (youngest) and older in the South (oldest) and West. A higher percent of hired farmworkers in the

West had completed less than 9 years of education while a higher percent of those in the Midwest had completed 13 or more years.

The West had the highest percent of workers (71 percent) employed in crop production, while the Midwest had the lowest (24 percent). These regions switched rankings in livestock production, with the Midwest having the highest percent of hired farmworkers (71 percent) and the West having the lowest (23 percent).

The percent of hired farmworkers in the Midwest earning less than \$200 per week was significantly greater than for all hired farmworkers, and the percent earning less than \$100 in the West was less. The lower earnings in the Midwest can be partially explained by the almost 36 percent of the hired farmworkers who worked part-time. In the West, 13 percent were part-time hired farmworkers.

Table 11—Number of hired farmworkers, by census region, 1990-98

Year	Annual averages									
	Northeast		South		Midwest		West		Totals	
	<i>Thousands</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Thousands</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Thousands</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Thousands</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Thousands</i>	
1990	62	6.9	315	35.6	214	24.1	295	33.4	886	
1991	54	6.1	328	37.1	206	23.3	296	33.5	884	
1992	52	6.1	320	37.8	201	23.7	275	32.4	848	
1993	49	6.1	301	37.5	172	21.4	281	35.0	803	
1994	47	6.0	312	39.4	146	18.4	287	36.2	792	
1995	60	7.1	274	32.3	170	20.0	345	40.6	849	
1996	65	7.2	280	30.9	217	23.9	344	38.0	906	
1997	57	6.4	286	32.1	176	19.8	370	41.7	889	
1998	64	7.4	275	31.4	167	19.1	369	42.2	875	

Note: Data for 1994 and later years are not directly comparable with data for 1993 and earlier years because of changes to survey design.
Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the Current Population Survey earnings microdata file.

Table 12—Demographic and earnings characteristics of hired farmworkers, by census region, 1998

Characteristic	Annual averages				
	Northeast	South	Midwest	West	All hired farmworkers
	<i>Thousands</i>				
Total	64	275	167	369	875
	<i>Percent</i>				
Gender:					
Male	70.1*	85.2	84.2	85.0	83.8
Female	29.9*	14.8	15.8	15.0	16.2
Racial/ethnic group:					
White	85.7*	50.1	96.0*	28.6*	52.4
Hispanic	5.7*	37.3	3.0*	68.9*	41.8
Black and others	8.6	12.6*	0.9*	2.5*	5.8
Age (years):					
Less than 20	19.1	9.2*	37.1*	9.0*	15.2
20-24	16.4	12.1	12.0	14.2	13.3
25-34	27.9	28.6	15.2*	27.6	25.6
35-44	20.1	20.7	15.0	24.4	21.1
45-54	5.9*	16.7	8.3*	16.0	14.0
55 and over	10.7	12.7	12.3	8.8	10.8
Median age	30*	35*	25*	34*	33
Schooling completed:					
0-4 years	1.2*	10.2	0.7*	17.8*	10.9
5-8 years	7.7*	20.4	5.7*	30.8*	21.1
9-11 years	26.4	27.2	33.3	19.2	24.9
12 years ¹	46.3*	27.5	33.4	19.0*	26.5
13 or more years	18.3	14.7	26.9*	13.1	16.6
Establishment:					
Crop production	34.6*	48.3	24.1*	71.1*	52.3
Livestock production	55.9	47.0	71.1*	22.8*	42.0
Other establishments ²	9.5	4.7	4.9	6.1	5.7
Status:					
Part-time	25.5	14.4	35.9*	12.6*	18.6
Full-time	74.5	85.6	64.1*	87.4*	81.4
Weekly earnings:					
Less than \$100	15.1	7.7	26.4*	6.1*	11.1
\$100-\$199	18.5	14.1	18.8*	11.7	14.3
\$200-\$299	28.0	39.6	15.3*	41.1	34.7
\$300-\$399	12.9	18.0	13.5	21.2	18.1
\$499-\$499	9.0	8.2	12.2	10.1	9.8
\$500-\$599	8.0	6.2	6.9	3.1	5.2
\$600 and over	8.5	6.3	7.0	6.7	6.7

¹Schooling completed: 12 years means that a person received a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent degree.

²Other establishments refer to agricultural services.

* Significantly different from all hired farmworkers at the 95-percent confidence level.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the Current Population Survey earnings microdata file.